B1

wherein said polypeptide does not comprise amino acids 918-947 of SEQ ID NO:2, and

wherein said polypeptide associates with SEQ ID NO:2 or with Apaf-1.

SUB E)

4. (Amended) A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 1, wherein the nucleotide sequence of said nucleic acid molecule is the same as that set forth in either of SEQ ID NOs:3 or 5.

5. (Amended) The nucleic acid molecule of either claim 1 or claim 71, wherein said nucleic acid molecule is cDNA.

6. (Amended) A vector containing the nucleic acid molecule of either claim 1 or claim 71.

B2

7. (Amended) Recombinant cells containing the nucleic acid molecule of either claim 1 or claim 71.

Sub D2

8. (Amended) An oligonucleotide comprising at least 30 contiguous nucleotides up to 1035 contiguous nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence set forth in any of SEQ ID Nos: 1, 3 and 5 or the complement of said nucleotide sequence.

9. (Amended) The oligonucleotide of any of claims 8, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 or 82, wherein said oligonucleotide is labeled with a detectable marker.

B3 11. (Amended) A kit for detecting the presence of a NAC nucleotide sequence comprising at least one oligonucleotide according to claim 9.

Sub D3 27. (Amended) A method for identifying nucleic acids encoding a mammalian NAC, said method comprising:

B4 contacting a sample containing nucleic acids with the oligonucleotide of any of claims 8, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81 or 82, wherein said contacting is effected under high stringency hybridization conditions, and identifying compounds which hybridize thereto.

Sub D4 66. (Amended) A functional fragment of the nucleic acid molecule of either claim 1 or claim 71, wherein said

B5 functional fragment comprises a nucleotide sequence encoding a CARD domain corresponding to amino acids 1373-1473 of SEQ ID NO:2, and wherein said functional fragment associates with SEQ ID NO:2 or with Apaf-1.

Please add new claims 67-85 as follows:

67. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1,

B6 comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% identity to SEQ ID NO:4 or 6.

Sub D5 68. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding amino acids 1373-1473 of SEQ ID NO:2.

69. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding amino acids 329-547 of SEQ ID NO:2.

70. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NO:4 or 6.

71. (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a NAC, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having at least 80% identity to SEQ ID NO:2, or the complement of said nucleotide sequence,

wherein said polypeptide comprises amino acids 1262-1305 of SEQ ID NO:2, and

wherein said polypeptide associates with SEQ ID NO:2 or with Apaf-1.

72. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 71, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having at least 95% identity to SEQ ID NO:2.

73. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 71, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding amino acids 1373-1473 of SEQ ID NO:2.

74. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 71, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding amino acids 329-547 of SEQ ID NO:2.

SUB B7

75. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 71, comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding SEQ ID NO:2.

76. (New) The nucleic acid molecule of claim 71, wherein the nucleotide sequence of said nucleic acid molecule is the same as that set forth in SEQ ID NO:1.

SUB B8

77. (New) An oligonucleotide consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 985-1641 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement, or comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides therefrom.

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78. (New) An oligonucleotide consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 2422-2844 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement, or comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides therefrom.

79. (New) An oligonucleotide consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 3235-3960 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement, or comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides therefrom.

80. (New) An oligonucleotide consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 2870-2959 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement, or comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides therefrom.

81. (New) An oligonucleotide consisting of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 4117-4419 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement, or comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides therefrom.

82. (New) An oligonucleotide comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence set forth as nucleotides 3784-3915 of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complement.

B6

83. (New) A method of modulating the level of apoptosis in a cell, comprising the steps of:

a) introducing a nucleic acid molecule encoding a NAC according to claim 71 into the cell; and

b) expressing said NAC in said cell, wherein the expression of said NAC modulates apoptosis in said cell.

SUB B8

84. (New) A method of modulating the level of apoptosis in a cell, comprising the steps of:

a) introducing a nucleic acid molecule encoding a NAC functional fragment according to claim 66 into the cell; and

b) expressing said NAC functional fragment in said cell, wherein the expression of said NAC functional fragment modulates apoptosis in said cell.